

# *Over the Mountains In the Blink of an Eye*

TACOMA, WA - The beautiful and imposing Cascade Mountains, which range in height from 984 feet to nearly 15,000 feet, were formed over the eons by fire and ice - geologic forces, volcanic eruptions, and ice-age glacial activity. The mountain range, which extends from British Columbia to California, runs down the length of Washington State, essentially dividing it into regions of different character, cultures, and climates.

The mountains also effectively separate the Washington Army National Guard's aviation assets, presenting a daunting logistical challenge. In the past, personnel were required to drive or fly across the range regularly to participate in planning meetings and strategy sessions. These routine trips sometimes took days and were subject to dramatic changes in weather and road conditions, as well as mechanical breakdown. In addition, the personnel making the journey were compelled to leave their homes, work, and families for days at a time to take part in meetings that sometimes lasted only several hours.

Now, however, members of the aviation community leverage the DTTP classrooms and technology to conduct virtual meetings, thereby avoiding costs, reducing risk of injury, and improving morale. In 2002, estimated savings and cost avoidance totaled nearly \$70,000 - funds that could then be reallocated for mission-critical activities and training.

Washington State currently operates six DTTP classrooms, located in Everett, Seattle, Kent, Tacoma, Yakima, and Spokane. These facilities help ensure that, when Washington National Guard personnel pack up and head for the mountains, it's because they want to, not because they have to.

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